श्री अर्जुन सिंह: ऐसी आशंका करना, मैं समझता हूं कि उचित नहीं होगा और ऐजुकेशन के क्षेत्र में सभी स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स केंद्र सरकार के साथ पूरी तरह से सहयोग करके कोशिश कर रही हैं और इसीलिए मैं कह सकता हूं कि हम यह लक्ष्य पूरा करने में सफल होंगे।

Appointments in DD News

*64. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that questionable procedure was adopted by Government in the past to appoint key people in Doordarshan news;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps initiated by Government to rectify the situation and fix accountability therefor?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) to (c) Prasar Bharti informs that key news professionals were appointed in Doordarshan News Channel on contractual basis in accordance with the procedure decided by the Prasar Bharati Board.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I always consider the hon. I&B Minister as one of my gurus in Parliament. I also appreciate the fact that has spoken with brevity. But, through you, I would like to know what his understanding is of the Prasar Bharti Act. The Prasar Bharti Act is a product of the parliamentary process. So, is the Government, the post box from which Parliament is to pick up information about Prasar Bharti, or, is Prasar Bharti accountable to somebody because his reply categorically says that the Government has not taken a view on whatever the Prasar Bharti has done? In my understanding, I would like to know whether the Prasar Bharti Act is correct or not. That assessment the Parliament has to get from the Ministry, from the Government, which is somehow absent in the reply.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, he is a very senior Member and when he wants to put questions knowingly, it is difficult to answer.

श्री सभापति: सीनियर मैम्बर हैं और आप उनके गुरु हैं, समस्या यह है।

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, under the Prasar Bharti Act, the Prasar Bharti Board is accountable to Parliament, through the Minister. The Minister as such has very few powers, in my view, rightly so. I have sought

information. The information that has been given to me has been furnished to Parliament. As for the functioning of the Prasar Bharti, I can always respond to his questions, take necessary steps to see that his questions are properly answered, his doubts are redressed and that work I shall do as a Minister.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Let me come to the specific question. I have documents in my possession, which show that the Prasar Bharti decided to appoint key professionals, news professionals in Doordarshan News. There was a Search Committee formed. Even before the Search Committee completed its work, the person concerned was appointed as the Consulting Editor. Two more Output Editors and News Editors were appointed. They brought in people without having any recruitment policy, without having any kind of proper recruitment procedure followed. The reservation laws that persist for the entire country for every organisation where taxpayer's money is involved...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is enough. Let him reply.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: So, through you, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether a full-fledged inquiry will be instituted by the Government to look into the whole procedure.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, of the 38 persons appointed, not everybody is a key news professional. Among the key news professionals, 13 in the meanwhile have chosen to resign. Therefore, they are no longer there. The three senior most people, namely the Consulting Editor, the Assignment Editor and the Output Editor have all resigned. Therefore, I do not think that much will be gained from digging into the past.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, if we go through the hon. Minister's reply, we understand his limitations. Sir, when the hon. Minister was in opposition, he was pleading for functional autonomy for Doordarshan. Now, as a Minister, he is understanding how functional autonomy is working in this country. ...(*Interruptions*)... I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether this Parliament and the Ministry cannot have control over the functioning of the Prasar Bharti.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have put your question.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, Parliament is the final master over everything, more particularly, the Prasar Bharti. Under the Act itself, Prasar

Bharti Board is accountable to Parliament and Prasar Bharti Board presents itself before the Standing Committee, before the Consultative Committee and before other Committees. Therefore, Prasar Bharti is absolutely accountable to Parliament, more particularly to Government.

Levying of licence fee

*65. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering levying of a licence fee for ownership of TVs, for funding Prasar Bharati's activities; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) No specific proposals are under consideration. However, various ideas have been mooted for strengthening Prasar Bharati's autonomous financial base.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, I have ten out of twenty questions. Out of the first five, four belong to me. I should be given a medal in addition to the Best Parliamentarian award.

My answer is: no specific proposals are under consideration. However, various ideas have been mooted for strengthening Prasar Bharti's autonomous financial base.

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Minister has said that various ideas have been mooted for strengthening Prasar Bharti's autonomous financial base. I want to know from the hon. Minister if there is any concrete proposal, concrete idea by which the revenue model of Prasar Bharti can be worked out.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, Prasar Bahrti is a public broadcasting corporation. Internationally, public broadcasters are supported by the Government and by the people directly. As Minister, Sir, I suggested that we could go in for a route of independent financing for Prasar Bharti with a view to removing uncertainty in Prasar Bharti, with a view to enriching and augmenting the content of autonomy. Therefore, I made a few proposals. They are all for public debate. I want the Members of Parliament to support me. One of the proposals I made was that we could go in for revival of licensing fee or we could go in for one time duty.